

Writing Grade 8

Writing is a critical skill for effective communication. Whether you are writing an email message, a personal letter, an ad for your business, or a formal report for school or work, being able to express your ideas clearly to your audience is important. Becoming a good writer is not easy. It takes effort and the development of a variety of skills: clear ideas, organization, a voice that holds the interest of your audience, and a consistent control of language, including word choice, sentence structure, and conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization). With new technology, it is possible to electronically communicate in writing with people all over the world in a matter of minutes. Writing will continue to be a communication skill that is required in most professions and workplace environments. Acquiring effective written communication skills will enhance both your personal and professional opportunities.

ABOUT THE TEST

You will be expected to write one extended writing piece on a specific topic. This writing test will be completed in one session, so all steps in the writing process including revising, editing, and writing a final copy will be done in that one session. The test should take approximately 2-3 hours to complete. Examples of scored student responses to a sample writing prompt are included on pages 12-23. These may help you prepare for the test. A copy of the Official Scoring Guide is also included at the end of this guide.

Hints for Taking AIMS DPA Writing

Prior to the test

- Read the four sample student responses to the prompt on the following pages. Note strengths and weaknesses in the paper as you read. Does the writer accomplish the task? Is the writer's message clear? Are the ideas supported with convincing evidence and support? Are the ideas organized so that you can logically follow them? Is the voice appropriate? Did the writer carefully choose words that are clear and convincing? Do the sentences have a natural flow? Is the paper carefully edited?
- Discuss with other students and your teacher why one paper is stronger or more convincing than another. Refer to the Official Scoring Guide when you analyze the sample papers and scores.
- Practice writing a response to this sample prompt. Score your own paper using the Official Scoring Guide to determine what your strengths are, and then work on areas you need to improve to be a more effective writer.

During the test

- Listen to directions, read the prompt carefully, and be sure you understand the purpose before beginning to write.
- Take time to organize your thoughts before you begin to write. For the extended writing prompt, you may want to create a graphic organizer (outline, web, chart, map, cluster, etc.) to plan and organize your ideas.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to revise your work using the checklist provided. Keep in mind the six traits (characteristics) of effective writing.
- Edit your writing carefully. Your audience (the reader) needs to be able to understand the ideas you are expressing without being hindered by spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar mistakes that interfere with the message. **You must be sure your handwriting is legible. Printing your work is acceptable; however, be sure to distinguish between upper- and lower- case letters. Do not print in all capital letters.**

Keep in mind...

- You will be given two pages in the test booklet to write your final copy. It is important that you take advantage of the two pages you are given to develop your ideas fully. This is your opportunity to demonstrate how well you can write.
- Your final copy needs to be handwritten in the answer document (not done on a computer).
- You may use a dictionary or thesaurus as a reference during the extended writing response portion of the test.
- Be conscious of the traits, or characteristics, of effective writing (idea development, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions) no matter what kind of writing you are asked to do. The same scoring guide, or rubric, will be used for all the types of writing you may be asked to compose: narrative, persuasive, expository, or functional communication.

The following four examples illustrate the scoring performed for the AIMS DPA Writing.

The first example is scored as “**Falls Far Below.**”

The second example is scored as “**Approaches.**”

The third example is scored as “**Meets.**”

The fourth example is scored as “**Exceeds.**”

Sample writing prompt:

People run for elected offices, from President of the United States to class officers in a school. You are running for class president for your grade level .

Write an essay convincing your classmates that you are the best choice for class president.

This is the Writer's Checklist you will see on the Grade 8 AIMS DPA Writing. Practice using it when writing to revise your rough draft before writing your final copy. If you take the time to use it carefully, it will help you write a better paper.

Writer's Checklist

- ☐ My paper has a specific audience and a specific purpose.
- ☐ My paper contains a strong controlling idea.
- ☐ My paper stays on topic.
- ☐ My paper includes specific and relevant details, reasons, and examples.
- ☐ My paper has an effective beginning, middle, and end.
- ☐ My paper progresses in a logical order and my ideas flow smoothly.
- ☐ My paper contains words that make it interesting.
- ☐ My paper contains sentences that are clear and varied in structure.
- ☐ My paper includes effective use of paragraphing.
- ☐ My paper includes correct grammar/usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Sample 1

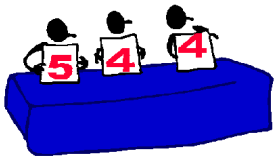
Writing

DIRECTIONS: Now write your final copy on the following two pages.

FINAL COPY

I think I can be a good class President if I can work on making better choices in an out school. I can help people all I can. I can try to do the right things. I can try to be more focused in class. I think especially this would be good for me too because these are great rules to follow for any body. I think I could be a good class President if I chase these goals.





Score Sheet for Writing Sample 1

Prompt:

People run for elected offices, from President of the United States to class officers in a school. You are running for class president for your grade level.

Write an essay convincing your classmates that you are the best choice for class president.

Paper Falls Far Below the standard

Ideas & Content

6 5 4 3 (2) 1

Organization

6 5 4 3 (2) 1

Voice

6 5 4 3 (2) 1

Word Choice

6 5 4 3 2 (1)

Sentence Fluency

6 5 4 3 (2) 1

Conventions

6 5 4 3 (2) 1

The underlined passages are taken from the *Official Scoring Guide for AIMS Writing* (Six Trait Rubric). Papers are original samples of Arizona student writing. Identifying information has been removed.

Ideas and Content: Development is attempted but minimal. The writer offers several ideas but there are insufficient details. **Score point is 2.**

Organization: The writing lacks a clear organizational structure. The piece is too short to demonstrate organizational skills. Both the beginning and the ending are extremely undeveloped. **Score point is 2.**

Voice: There is no evidence that the writer has chosen a suitable voice. There is a lack of audience awareness. There is rarely a sense of interaction between reader and writer. The writer seems more focused on his/her behavior than becoming president. **Score point is 2.**

Word Choice: The writing shows extremely limited vocabulary. Only the most general kind of message is communicated. Language ("I think...", "I can...", "good," and "things") is vague and imprecise. **Score point is 1.**

Sentence Fluency: The writing is choppy and rambling. Sentence patterns are monotonous. Every sentence the writer uses begins with "I." **Score point is 2.**

Conventions: The writing demonstrates little control of standard writing conventions. There are spelling errors of common words ("Presedent," "makeing," "choises," "an," and "expecily"). Also, internal punctuation is missing. **Score point is 2.**

Sample 2A

Writing

DIRECTIONS: Now write your final copy on the following two pages.

FINAL COPY

I am going to tell you why I think you should pick me for your student president for the 2003-2004 year. I want to change the school not only for us but for everybody who comes to the school. I want people to say how nice it looks when they come. Just like Uncle Sam said, "I want you to join the army". Well, I want you to help me make a difference in our school. I believe everyone can make a difference, not just a tiny difference but a huge difference.

Now I am going to tell you about me and why I would love to be your class president. I think you should pick me because I am very responsible in a lot of ways. For example, I always bring my homework and also my materials. I am never late to my classes.

Some people might not care and say, "Well who cares about this dumb school, I think it looks fine the way it is." If people say that they need to look a lot closer and keep their eyes wide, because our school looks like a tornado went through it and all the

Sample 2B

Writing

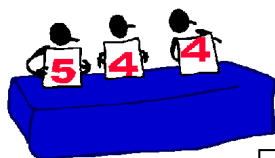
FINAL COPY

Cafeteria food went everywhere, for example food is thrown on the grass and food is left on tables and wiped on the floor.

All I am really asking for you to vote for me because I feel that if you vote for me I will change the school just for you.

Page 6





Score Sheet for Writing Sample 2

Prompt:

People run for elected offices, from President of the United States to class officers in a school. You are running for class president for your grade level.

Write an essay convincing your classmates that you are the best choice for class president.

Paper Approaches the standard.

Ideas & Content

6 5 4 (3) 2 1

Organization

6 5 4 (3) 2 1

Voice

6 5 (4) 3 2 1

Word Choice

6 5 4 (3) 2 1

Sentence Fluency

6 5 4 (3) 2 1

Conventions

6 5 4 (3) 2 1

The underlined passages are taken from the *Official Scoring Guide for AIMS Writing* (Six Trait Rubric). Papers are original samples of Arizona student writing. Identifying information has been removed.

Ideas and Content: The reader can understand the main ideas, although they are overly simplistic. Supporting detail is limited and slightly off-topic. The writer devotes a paragraph to discussing the negative aspects of how the school looks but offers no direct connection to this problem and the bid for becoming president. **Score point is 3.**

Organization: An attempt has been made to organize the writing. The beginning (“I am going to tell you...”) and ending (“All I am really asking...”) are undeveloped. Paragraph two begins nearly identically to paragraph one. **Score point is 3.**

Voice: In places, the writing is expressive, engaging, and sincere. There is, however, an inconsistent level of closeness to or distance from the audience. For instance, in paragraph one, the writer connects with the reader: “I want you to help me make a difference in our school.” Then in the next paragraph, the writer begins “Now I am going to tell you about me...” **Score point is 4.**

Word Choice: Language is ordinary, lacking precision and variety. The verbs “want,” “need,” and “think” are overused, as are the “to be” verbs. **Score point is 3.**

Sentence Fluency: The writing tends to be mechanical rather than fluid. Awkward constructions force the reader to reread. The third paragraph is extremely awkward. While there is control over simple sentences, more complex sentences aren’t fluid. Repetitious subject-verb construction is also a problem. **Score point is 3.**

Conventions: While the writer demonstrates limited control of standard writing conventions, the text is too simple to reveal mastery. Errors in grammar and usage distract the reader, such as the following common words: “cane” for can; “responsable” for responsible; “threw” for through; “threwn” for thrown; and “tabels” for tables. **Score point is 3.**

Sample 3A

Writing

DIRECTIONS: Now write your final copy on the following two pages.

FINAL COPY

Being the President of the United States is a very difficult job, but isn't class president a challenge also. Well, I am willing to accept the challenge and become your class president.

A good president needs to show many qualities that ensures everyone that the job will be done. The first characteristic that I possess is leadership. Isn't leadership an important quality to have because I am trying to be the "leader" of the class. I have never before run for any type of office, but I show leadership everyday. If there is a problem I take a stand and try to fix it. During my after school activities I am a leader because I help motivate the team and lead it to victory. Leadership is an important part of being president.

Other attributes that I show are organization and I am smart. Everything needs to be in order. I always keep my room clean and everything is in its place. I am also very organized at school. A teacher once told me that I will have a successful year because in my world

Sample 3B

Writing

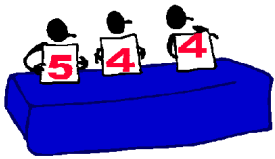
FINAL COPY

everything is black and white. My interpretation of what she had said is that to me everything needs to be neat and orderly, which is true. I am awarded excellent grades in school, sure sometimes I struggle, but I'm only human. I believe that I have the common sense and brains that you need to be president.

Last but not least I will include you in my decisions. Most presidents make choices based on what they want, but I won't. I want to hear what you have to say. You should make the decisions and I will just use my skills and try to make sure that you feel light hearted.

All in all, I think I would make an excellent president. I have many qualities a leader should show, now I just need you to have faith in me. I can overcome the challenge.





Score Sheet for Writing Sample 3

Prompt:

People run for elected offices, from President of the United States to class officers in a school. You are running for class president for your grade level.

Write an essay convincing your classmates that you are the best choice for class president.

Paper Meets the standard

Ideas & Content

6 5 4 3 2 1

Organization

6 5 4 3 2 1

Voice

6 5 4 3 2 1

Word Choice

6 5 4 3 2 1

Sentence Fluency

6 5 4 3 2 1

Conventions

6 5 4 3 2 1

The underlined passages are taken from the *Official Scoring Guide for AIMS Writing* (Six Trait Rubric). Papers are original samples of Arizona student writing. Identifying information has been removed.

Ideas and Content: The writing is clear and focused. Support is present, although it is often very general. The topic is explored, although developmental details are occasionally out of balance with the main idea. For instance, the writer reminisces about a teacher telling him/her that “...everything was black and white...” in his/her world. Tying this to neatness is not thoroughly or clearly explained as an attribute for holding class office. “...sure sometimes I struggle, but I’m only human.” is trite and of questionable value as support. **Score point is 4.**

Organization: Organization is clear and coherent. Order and structure are present but seems formulaic. The paper has a recognizable beginning, a body that is easy to follow, and a developed conclusion. Formulaic transitions such as “Last but not least...” and “All in all...” detract from the organization. **Score point is 4.**

Voice: The writer demonstrates commitment to the topic. In places the writing is expressive. “I want to hear what you have to say” allows the reader to glimpse the writer behind the words. The writer seems to be aware of the reader. **Score point is 4.**

Word Choice: Words convey the intended message, and the writer employs a broad range of words. The reader is treated to expressive words such as “challenge,” “motivate,” “interpretation,” “attributes,” and “lighthearted.” **Score point is 5.**

Sentence Fluency: The writing flows. Strong control over simple sentences exhibits good writing. Sentence patterns are somewhat varied, contributing to ease in oral reading. “Isn’t leadership an important quality to have because I am trying to be the ‘leader’ of the class” is an example of a lapse in stylistic control. **Score point is 4.**

Conventions: Minor errors do not impede readability. The writing is characterized by control over conventions used, although a wide range is not demonstrated. The writer uses basically sound paragraph breaks that reinforce the organizational structure. There is only a moderate need for editing. **Score point is 4.**

Sample 4A

Writing

DIRECTIONS: Now write your final copy on the following two pages.

FINAL COPY

Good Afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls! My name is _____ and I am in the running for student-body president. This school is an abundance of education and learning. I'm here today to help govern this school to the best of my ability. Our faculty and staff have already done an excellent job, but I'm here just to add to wealth and make this school the best it can possibly be.

My school means everything to me. If I am elected school president, any problems or concerns will be dealt with right up front with none else but me. From there I will make my best effort to notify someone who will help the situation, whatever it may be. Furthermore, if anyone has any private concerns, family problems, intentions, whatever, I'll keep it very confidential. I assure you, anything can be laid to rest if only you tell me about it.

On a lighter note, I have always been involved in after school activities ranging from Advanced Boys Christosport program. I also perform service hours with the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) as means to better the world we live in. Succeeding and doing well in school has always been my top priority. I'm

Sample 4B

Writing

FINAL COPY

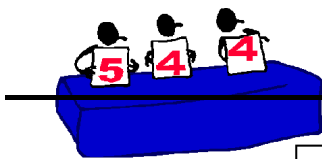
received high marks in my classes ever since I can remember. My love of education is very dear to me and I hope someday you might have it, too.

I put my right foot forward when saying I want this school to be the best of the best. Obviously, we cannot have perfume in the bathrooms, ladies, or McDonald's in the cafeteria, gentlemen. But we can at least have ^{mirrors} in our restrooms. With your help, I think we can get this and many other things accomplished.

The upmost concern I have is representing our school as it should be represented. If elected, I will attend every student council meeting flawlessly, unless extremely ill. Being punctual and not procrastinating would be another top priority this year. It would put our school in top form.

I have to say, there is a lot of good candidates this year. I wouldn't like to be in your shoes right now. It's a tough decision, but I guess I'll leave you with a prompt. Before you mark your vote, take a second to reflect on the speeches and the kind of people that each candidate is. Do you want someone who gets to class late, is careless and lazy? I don't think so, why not vote for someone who truly deserves it, someone who has ethics and integrity, someone like me? So remember vote for who has all of that and more!





Score sheet for Writing Sample

Prompt:

People run for elected office, from President of the United States to class officers at school. You are running for class president at your grade level.

Write an essay convincing your classmates that you are the best choice for class president.

Ideas & Content

6 5 4 3 2 1

Organization

6 5 4 3 2 1

Voice

6 5 4 3 2 1

Word Choice

6 5 4 3 2 1

Sentence Fluency

6 5 4 3 2 1

Conventions

6 5 4 3 2 1

The underlined passages are taken from the *Official Scoring Guide for AIMS Writing* (Six Trait Rubric). Papers are original samples of Arizona student writing. Identifying information has been removed.

Ideas and Content: Main ideas stand out and are developed by supporting ideas suitable to audience and purpose. The writer demonstrates clarity, focus, and control. Paragraph four's discussion of bathrooms and the cafeteria is in sync with the audience. **Score point is 5.**

Organization: The order and structure move the reader through the text easily. The writer uses effective and creative sequencing: "Furthermore," "From there...", "On a lighter note...", and "I have to say..." The paper has a strong, inviting beginning that draws the reader in and a strong satisfying sense of closure. **Score point is 6.**

Voice: The writer has chosen a voice appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. There is an exceptional sense of "writing to be read." The writing is expressive, engaging, and sincere. The paper appeals to the audience, yet has an honest tone in the writing as it shows originality ("But we can at least have mirrors in our restrooms."), liveliness, and conviction ("...so why not vote for someone who truly deserves it, someone who has ethics and integrity, someone like me."). **Score point is 6.**

Word Choice: Words convey the intended message in an interesting and natural way appropriate to audience and purpose. The writer employs a broad range of words, often experimenting ("...attend...flawlessly..." and "The upmost concern..."), but just as often hitting the mark ("...to help govern this school..." , "...my top priority..." and "...who has ethics and integrity..."). **Score point is 5.**

Sentence Fluency: Sentences show a high degree of craftsmanship. Oral reading is easy and enjoyable. Extensive variation in sentence structure, length, and beginnings add interest to the writing. The paper has an overall natural and fluent sound. "I'm here today to help govern this school to the best of my ability. Our faculty and staff have already done an excellent job, but I'm here to add to [the] wealth and make this school the best it can possibly be." **Score point is 6.**

Conventions: Errors are few and minor; they do not impede readability. Paragraph breaks reinforce the organizational structure. There is little need for editing. **Score point is 5.**

AIMS Six Trait Analytic Writing Rubric – Official Scoring Guide

IDEAS and CONTENT

<p>6</p> <p>The writing is exceptionally clear, focused and interesting. It holds the reader's attention throughout. Main ideas stand out and are developed by strong support and rich details suitable to audience and purpose. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarity, focus, and control. • main idea(s) that stand out. • supporting, relevant, carefully selected details; when appropriate, use of resources provides strong, accurate, credible support • a thorough, balanced, in-depth explanation/ exploration of the topic; the writing makes connections and shares insights. • content and selected details that are well suited to audience and purpose. 	<p>5</p> <p>The writing is clear, focused and interesting. It holds the reader's attention. Main ideas stand out and are developed by supporting details suitable to audience and purpose. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarity, focus, and control. • main idea(s) that stand out. • supporting, relevant, carefully selected details; when appropriate, use of resources provides strong, accurate, credible support. • a thorough, balanced explanation/exploration of the topic; the writing makes connections and shares insights. • content and selected details that are well-suited to audience and purpose. 	<p>4</p> <p>The writing is clear and focused. The reader can easily understand the main ideas. Support is present, although it may be limited or rather general. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an easily identifiable purpose. • clear main idea(s) • supporting details that are relevant, but may be overly general or limited in places; when appropriate, resources are used to provide accurate support. • a topic that is explored/explained, although developmental details may occasionally be out of balance with the main idea(s); some connections and insights may be present. • content and selected details that are relevant, but perhaps not consistently well chosen for audience and purpose.
<p>3</p> <p>The reader can understand the main ideas, although they may be overly broad or simplistic, and the results may not be effective. Supporting detail is often limited, insubstantial, overly general, or occasionally slightly off-topic. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an easily identifiable purpose and main idea(s). • predictable or overly-obvious main ideas or plot; conclusions or main points seem to echo observations heard elsewhere. • support that is attempted; but developmental details that are often limited in scope, uneven, somewhat off-topic, predictable, or overly general. • details that may not be well-grounded in credible resources; they may be based on clichés, stereotypes or questionable sources of information. • difficulties when moving from general observations to specifics. 	<p>2</p> <p>Main ideas and purpose are somewhat unclear or development is attempted but minimal. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a purpose and main idea(s) that may require extensive inferences by the reader. • minimal development; insufficient details. • irrelevant details that clutter the text. • extensive repetition of detail. 	<p>1</p> <p>The writing lacks a central idea or purpose. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ideas that are extremely limited or simply unclear. • attempts at development that are minimal or non-existent; the paper is too short to demonstrate the development of an idea.

AIMS Six Trait Analytic Writing Rubric – Official Scoring Guide

ORGANIZATION

<p>6</p> <p>The organization enhances the central idea(s) and its development. The order and structure are compelling and move the reader through the text easily. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective, perhaps creative, sequencing; the organizational structure fits the topic, and the writing is easy to follow. • a strong, inviting beginning that draws the reader in and a strong satisfying sense of resolution or closure. • smooth, effective transitions among all elements (sentences, paragraphs, and ideas). • details that fit where placed. 	<p>5</p> <p>The organization enhances the central idea(s) and its development. The order and structure are strong and move the reader through the text. The writing is characterized by.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective sequencing; the organizational structure fits the topic, and the writing is easy to follow. • an inviting beginning that draws the reader in and a satisfying sense of resolution or closure. • smooth, effective transitions among all elements (sentences, paragraphs, and ideas). • details that fit where placed. 	<p>4</p> <p>Organization is clear and coherent. Order and structure are present, but may seem formulaic. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear sequencing. • an organization that may be predictable. • a recognizable, developed beginning that may not be particularly inviting; a developed conclusion that may lack subtlety. • a body that is easy to follow with details that fit where placed. • transitions that may be stilted or formulaic. • organization which helps the reader, despite some weaknesses.
<p>3</p> <p>An attempt has been made to organize the writing; however, the overall structure is inconsistent or skeletal. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attempts at sequencing, but the order or the relationship among ideas may occasionally be unclear. • a beginning and an ending which, although present, are either undeveloped or too obvious (e.g. “My topic is...”, “These are all the reasons that...”) • transitions that sometimes work. The same few transitional devices (e.g., coordinating conjunctions, numbering, etc.) may be overused. • a structure that is skeletal or too rigid. • placement of details that may not always be effective. • organization which lapses in some places, but helps the reader in others. 	<p>2</p> <p>The writing lacks a clear organizational structure. An occasional organizational device is discernible; however, the writing is either difficult to follow and the reader has to reread substantial portions, or the piece is simply too short to demonstrate organizational skills. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some attempts at sequencing, but the order or the relationship among ideas is frequently unclear. • a missing or extremely undeveloped beginning, body, and/or ending. • a lack of transitions, or when present, ineffective or overused. • a lack of an effective organizational structure. • details that seem to be randomly placed, leaving the reader frequently confused. 	<p>1</p> <p>The writing lacks coherence; organization seems haphazard and disjointed. Even after rereading, the reader remains confused. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a lack of effective sequencing. • a failure to provide an identifiable beginning, body and/or ending. • a lack of transitions. • pacing that is consistently awkward; the reader feels either mired down in trivia or rushed along too rapidly. • a lack of organization which ultimately obscures or distorts the main point.

© Oregon Department of Education. All rights reserved.

AIMS Six Trait Analytic Writing Rubric – Official Scoring Guide

VOICE

<p>6</p> <p>The writer has chosen a voice appropriate for the topic, purpose and audience. The writer seems deeply committed to the topic, and there is an exceptional sense of “writing to be read.” The writing is expressive, engaging, or sincere. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an effective level of closeness to or distance from the audience (e.g., a narrative should have a strong personal voice, while an expository piece may require extensive use of outside resources and a more academic voice; nevertheless, both should be engaging, lively, or interesting. Technical writing may require greater distance.). • an exceptionally strong sense of audience; the writer seems to be aware of the reader and of how to communicate the message most effectively. The reader may discern the writer behind the words and feel a sense of interaction. • a sense that the topic has come to life; when appropriate, the writing may show originality, liveliness, honesty, conviction, excitement, humor, or suspense. 	<p>5</p> <p>The writer has chosen a voice appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. The writer seems committed to the topic, and there is a sense of “writing to be read.” The writing is expressive, engaging or sincere. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an appropriate level of closeness to or distance from the audience (e.g., a narrative should have a strong personal voice while an expository piece may require extensive use of outside resources and a more academic voice; nevertheless, both should be engaging, lively or interesting. Technical writing may require greater distance.). • a strong sense of audience; the writer seems to be aware of the reader and of how to communicate the message most effectively. The reader may discern the writer behind the words and feel a sense of interaction. • a sense that the topic has come to life; when appropriate, the writing may show originality, liveliness, honesty, conviction, excitement, humor, or suspense. 	<p>4</p> <p>A voice is present. The writer demonstrates commitment to the topic, and there may be a sense of “writing to be read.” In places, the writing is expressive, engaging, or sincere. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a questionable or inconsistent level of closeness to or distance from the audience. • a sense of audience; the writer seems to be aware of the reader but has not consistently employed an appropriate voice. The reader may glimpse the writer behind the words and feel a sense of interaction in places. • liveliness, sincerity, or humor when appropriate; however, at times the writing may be either inappropriately casual or personal, or inappropriately formal and stiff.
<p>3</p> <p>The writer’s commitment to the topic seems inconsistent. A sense of the writer may emerge at times; however, the voice is either inappropriately personal or inappropriately impersonal. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a limited sense of audience; the writer’s awareness of the reader is unclear. • an occasional sense of the writer behind the words; however, the voice may shift or disappear a line or two later and the writing become somewhat mechanical. • a limited ability to shift to a more objective voice when necessary. 	<p>2</p> <p>The writing provides little sense of involvement or commitment. There is no evidence that the writer has chosen a suitable voice. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little engagement of the writer; the writing tends to be largely flat, lifeless, stiff, or mechanical. • a voice that is likely to be overly informal and personal. • a lack of audience awareness; there is little sense of “writing to be read.” • little or no hint of the writer behind the words. There is rarely a sense of interaction between reader and writer. 	<p>1</p> <p>The writing seems to lack a sense of involvement or commitment. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no engagement of the writer; the writing is flat and lifeless. • a lack of audience awareness; there is no sense of “writing to be read.” • no hint of the writer behind the words. There is no sense of interaction between writer and reader; the writing does not involve or engage the reader.

© Oregon Department of Education. All rights reserved.

AIMS Six Trait Analytic Writing Rubric – Official Scoring Guide

WORD CHOICE

<p>6</p> <p>Words convey the intended message in an exceptionally interesting, precise, and natural way appropriate to audience and purpose. The writer employs a rich, broad range of words, which have been carefully chosen and thoughtfully placed for impact. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurate, strong, specific words; powerful words energize the writing. • fresh, original expression; slang, if used, seems purposeful and is effective. • vocabulary that is striking and varied, but that is natural and not overdone. • ordinary words used in an unusual way. • words that evoke strong images; figurative language may be used. 	<p>5</p> <p>Words convey the intended message in an interesting, precise, and natural way appropriate to audience and purpose. The writer employs a broad range of words which have been carefully chosen and thoughtfully placed for impact. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurate, specific words; word choices energize the writing. • fresh, vivid expression; slang, if used, seems purposeful and is effective. • vocabulary that may be striking and varied, but that is natural and not overdone. • ordinary words used in an unusual way. • words that evoke clear images; figurative language may be used. 	<p>4</p> <p>Words effectively convey the intended message. The writer employs a variety of words that are functional and appropriate to audience and purpose. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • words that work but do not particularly energize the writing. • expression that is functional; however, slang, if used, does not seem purposeful and is not particularly effective. • attempts at colorful language that may occasionally seem overdone. • occasional overuse of technical language or jargon. • rare experiments with language; however, the writing may have some fine moments and generally avoids clichés.
<p>3</p> <p>Language is quite ordinary, lacking interest, precision and variety, or may be inappropriate to audience and purpose in places. The writer does not employ a variety of words, producing a sort of “generic” paper filled with familiar words and phrases. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • words that work, but that rarely capture the reader’s interest. • expression that seems mundane and general; slang, if used, does not seem purposeful and is not effective. • attempts at colorful language that seem overdone or forced. • words that are accurate for the most part, although misused words may occasionally appear, technical language or jargon may be overused or inappropriately used. • reliance on clichés and overused expressions. 	<p>2</p> <p>Language is monotonous and/or misused, detracting from the meaning and impact. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • words that are colorless, flat or imprecise. • monotonous repetition or overwhelming reliance on worn expressions that repeatedly distract from the message. • images that are fuzzy or absent altogether. 	<p>1</p> <p>The writing shows an extremely limited vocabulary or is so filled with misuses of words that the meaning is obscured. Only the most general kind of message is communicated because of vague or imprecise language. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general, vague words that fail to communicate. • an extremely limited range of words. • words that simply do not fit the text; they seem imprecise, inadequate, or just plain wrong.

AIMS Six Trait Analytic Writing Rubric – Official Scoring Guide

SENTENCE FLUENCY

<p>6</p> <p>The writing has an effective flow and rhythm. Sentences show a high degree of craftsmanship, with consistently strong and varied structure that makes expressive oral reading easy and enjoyable. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a natural, fluent sound; it glides along with one sentence flowing effortlessly into the next. • extensive variation in sentence structure, length, and beginnings that add interest to the text. • sentence structure that enhances meaning by drawing attention to key ideas or reinforcing relationships among ideas. • varied sentence patterns that create an effective combination of power and grace. • strong control over sentence structure; fragments, if used at all, work well. • stylistic control; dialogue, if used, sounds natural. 	<p>5</p> <p>The writing has an easy flow and rhythm. Sentences are carefully crafted, with strong and varied structure that makes expressive oral reading easy and enjoyable. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a natural, fluent sound; it glides along with one sentence flowing into the next. • variation in sentence structure, length, and beginnings that add interest to the text. • sentence structure that enhances meaning. • control over sentence structure; fragments, if used at all, work well. • stylistic control; dialogue, if used sounds natural. 	<p>4</p> <p>The writing flows; however, connections between phrases or sentences may be less than fluid. Sentence patterns are somewhat varied, contributing to ease in oral reading. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a natural sound; the reader can move easily through the piece, although it may lack a certain rhythm and grace. • some repeated patterns of sentence structure, length, and beginnings that may detract somewhat from overall impact. • strong control over simple sentence structures, but variable control over more complex sentences; fragments, if present, are usually effective. • occasional lapses in stylistic control; dialogue, if used, sounds natural for the most part, but may at times sound stilted or unnatural.
<p>3</p> <p>The writing tends to be mechanical rather than fluid. Occasional awkward constructions may force the reader to slow down or reread. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some passages that invite fluid oral reading; however, others do not. • some variety in sentences structure, length, and beginnings, although the writer falls into repetitive sentence patterns. • good control over simple sentence structures, but little control over more complex sentences; fragments, if present, may not be effective. • sentences which, although functional, lack energy. • lapses in stylistic control; dialogue, if used, may sound stilted or unnatural. 	<p>2</p> <p>The writing tends to be either choppy or rambling. Awkward constructions often force the reader to slow down or reread. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant portions of the text that are difficult to follow or read aloud. • sentence patterns that are monotonous (e.g., subject-verb or subject-verb-object). • a significant number of awkward, choppy, or rambling constructions. 	<p>1</p> <p>The writing is difficult to follow or to read aloud. Sentences tend to be incomplete, rambling, or very awkward. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text that does not invite—and may not even permit—smooth oral reading. • confusing word order that is often jarring and irregular. • sentence structure that frequently obscures meaning. • sentences that are disjointed, confusing, or rambling.

AIMS Six Trait Analytic Writing Rubric – Official Scoring Guide

CONVENTIONS

<p>6</p> <p>The writing demonstrates exceptionally strong control of standard writing conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, paragraph breaks, grammar and usage) and uses them effectively to enhance communication. Errors are so few and so minor that the reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searching for them. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong control of conventions; manipulation of conventions may occur for stylistic effect. • strong, effective use of punctuation that guides the reader through the text. • correct spelling, even of more difficult words. • paragraph breaks that reinforce the organizational structure. • correct grammar and usage that contribute to clarity and style. • skill in using a wide range of conventions in a sufficiently long and complex piece. • little or no need for editing. 	<p>5</p> <p>The writing demonstrates strong control of standard writing conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, paragraph breaks, grammar and usage) and uses them effectively to enhance communication. Errors are so few and so minor that they do not impede readability. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong control of conventions. • effective use of punctuation that guides the reader through the text. • correct spelling, even of more difficult words. • paragraph breaks that reinforce the organizational structure. • correct capitalization; errors, if any, are minor. • correct grammar and usage that contribute to clarity and style. • skill in using a wide range of conventions in a sufficiently long and complex piece. • little need for editing. 	<p>4</p> <p>The writing demonstrates control of standard writing conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, paragraph breaks, grammar and usage). Minor errors, while perhaps noticeable, do not impede readability. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • control over conventions used, although a wide range is not demonstrated. • correct end-of-sentence punctuation, internal punctuation may sometimes be incorrect. • spelling that is usually correct, especially on common words. • basically sound paragraph breaks that reinforce the organizational structure. • correct capitalization; errors, if any, are minor. • occasional lapses in correct grammar and usage; problems are not severe enough to distort meaning or confuse the reader. • moderate need for editing.
<p>3</p> <p>The writing demonstrates limited control of standard writing conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, paragraph breaks, grammar and usage). Errors begin to impede readability. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some control over basic conventions; the text may be too simple to reveal mastery. • end-of-sentence punctuation that is usually correct; however, internal punctuation contains frequent errors. • spelling errors that distract the reader; misspelling of common words occurs. • paragraphs that sometimes run together or begin at ineffective places. • capitalization errors. • errors in grammar and usage that do not block meaning but do distract the reader. • significant need for editing. 	<p>2</p> <p>The writing demonstrates little control of standard writing conventions. Frequent, significant errors impede readability. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little control over basic conventions. • many end-of-sentence punctuation errors; internal punctuation contains frequent errors. • spelling errors that frequently distract the reader; misspelling of common words often occurs. • paragraphs that often run together or begin in ineffective places. • capitalization that is inconsistent or often incorrect. • errors in grammar and usage that interfere with readability and meaning. • substantial need for editing. 	<p>1</p> <p>Numerous errors in usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. In fact, the severity and frequency of errors are so overwhelming that the reader finds it difficult to focus on the message and must reread for meaning. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very limited skill in using conventions. • basic punctuation (including end-of-sentence punctuation) that tends to be omitted, haphazard, or incorrect. • frequent spelling errors that significantly impair readability. • paragraph breaks that may be highly irregular or so frequent (every sentence) that they bear no relation to the organization of the text. • capitalization that appears to be random. • a need for extensive editing.